

THE REFORMER.

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Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth. . . . Jeremiah v. 1.

"THOUGHTS ON LAY-PREACHING"—AGAIN.

The "CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE," late the *Presbyterian Magazine*, under the sanction of its new Editor, "DR." GREEN, has again taken up the subject of *Lay-Preaching*, and published a communication of considerable length, designed to convince the public of the "*sin*," yes, reader, the *sin of Lay-Preaching!!* If priestly arrogance, not to say impudence, ever assumed a more brazen front than it has in this instance, we are unable at present to call it to remembrance. Prudence and good sense, we should suppose, would have kept the Presbyterian Clergy from advancing such sentiments on such a subject. It comes indeed with a peculiar ill grace from such men—for having made preaching a trade to obtain a sumptuous living, and having hordes of young men training up to engage in the same calling, no persons who are acquainted with them and their proceedings heretofore, will have such an overweening opinion of their integrity, and regard to the true interests of Christ's kingdom, as not to believe they are actuated by sinister motives, in inculcating the idea, that only regularly constituted priests are to deliver any public instruction: particularly as they have no Scripture authority for such an arrogant assumption, nor attempt to adduce any. They can readily perceive if laymen were to give instruction, and hold meetings, the business of preaching might be taken out of their hands, and their salaries be stopped or greatly reduced. Hence their endeavours to make the people believe that *Lay-Preaching is a sin*. Popery itself has seldom or never entered upon a more bold and daring expedient to promote its interests than this—for there is as little authority from the New Testament for what they are labouring to enforce, as there is for selling indulgences. Has their interest indeed wholly blinded their eyes, or is there nothing which they

will not adventure upon to secure their own emoluments and aggrandizement! For our own part, we are fully convinced, if the business of preaching were wholly taken out of the hands of those who now consider themselves the only regularly authorized and "competent religious teachers," and confined to such as are termed "lay-men," it would be more to the interest of the kingdom of Christ and the cause of righteousness. Whether these monopolizing Parsons will favour us with any more of their "*Thoughts on Lay-Preaching*," time must determine. In point of arrogance, they have already outdone *Lyman Beecher* in his famous Address; and if they had power to enforce their mandates, something more than excommunication or church censure, would, no doubt, be exercised against those who should disregard their admonitions or resist their pretensions. We can only make a few extracts from these last "*Thoughts on Lay-Preaching*." They are contained in the *Christian Advocate* for January, 1823, and will speak for themselves.

" All experience proves, that the public speaking of unauthorized men is liable to become excessive and irregular, and that it is hard to control. When once the door is opened, who will shut it, or at what point will it be shut? In most of the great revivals of religion that I have ever read or heard of, more or less of this irregularity appeared. In the celebrated and truly glorious revivals which occurred, and which prevailed very extensively in this country, under the ministry of *Whitefield*, *Edwards*, the *Tennents*, and other distinguished ministers of Christ, from fifty to seventy years ago, irregularities as to this point were frequently complained of, and evidently, in some cases, injured the cause of religion. And I suppose they seldom fail in some degree to arise, whenever a large number of persons in the same neighbourhood are awakened and brought to the knowledge of the truth. I suppose, too, that the season of their exhibition seldom closes without leaving all judicious and prudent people perfectly convinced that they are mischievous, and to be deplored. But in this, as well as in other important cases, those lessons which are learned one generation, are generally forgotten before another arises. It seems to be necessary, then, for the churches, every few years, to learn by woful experience, the mischiefs of *lay-preaching*,

and *lay-exhorting*, and to be delivered from them only after witnessing for themselves their unhappy effects.

“ I propose in this paper, very briefly, to inquire what that LAY-PREACHING is, which ought to be discountenanced and prohibited by all regular churches; and then point out some of the MISCHIEFS of this irregularity.

“ I. What is *Lay-preaching*? What is that instruction and exhortation on the part of *laymen* which is inconsistent with gospel order, and which every church which respects the will and ordinances of her Divine Head, and wishes to maintain a respectable character, ought to forbid?

“ It is evident from Scripture, that private Christians are bound to *exhort one another daily, lest they be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin*. In whomsoever they observe any thing contrary to sound doctrine or practice, they are bound, if they have a suitable opportunity, to bear testimony against it. And whenever they find those who need instruction and exhortation, they undoubtedly ought to take occasion, if Providence open a door for the purpose, to address them in a reasonable manner. This, however, it is apprehended, ought to be confined to the *private circle*, and by no means to encroach on that public, authoritative instruction, which ministers of the gospel are commanded to communicate, in the name of their Master.

“ Again: *Parents and heads of families* are certainly bound frequently to address their children and servants, and all who belong to their households, on the great interests of their souls and eternity.

“ In short, laymen may, with propriety, engage in all those acts of instruction and exhortation which are, properly speaking, *private* in their nature. They may teach, entreat, or exhort any individual, or company of individuals, into whose presence they may happen to come, provided they do it as *private persons*; without any thing *authoritative* either in their language or manner. But when those who have received no ordination or license, from any proper ecclesiastical authority, undertake *publickly* to address their fellow men, as those who are authorized to do so; *expecting and claiming* to be heard, as public teachers; and requesting an assembly to listen to them as speaking in the name of Christ;—whether they go into a *pulpit*, or not; whether they wear a particular *dress*, or not;—whether

they speak from a formal *text* or not—they certainly invade the province of ministers, and are chargeable with the disorder and sin of *lay-preaching*.

“ Before I take leave of this branch of the subject, I think proper to observe, that candidates for the holy ministry, and by these I mean, such young men as have completed their academical course, and are actually engaged in the study of theology, are certainly to be considered as standing in a very different light from other laymen. For, although not yet licensed to preach, they are in training for that purpose; and, of course, those exercises which have a tendency to cultivate and strengthen their faculties, and to prepare them to address their fellow men with ease, force and impressiveness, form a very important part of their training; and therefore ought not to be wholly prohibited. It is true, even theological students, previously to their licensure, ought to exercise their gifts only in the presence of small assemblies of people, and, for the most part, in retired situations, and even then with marked humility and modesty, and never to take on themselves, either in language or manner, that *authority* which belongs only to those whom the constituted governors of the church have regularly clothed with power. Besides, theological students, who aspire to the office of teachers and guides to others, are supposed, in general, to have better talents, to be better educated, and to possess more fervent enlightened piety, than the common mass of lay-members of the church; and, therefore, may be more safely trusted to participate in those public exercises, which demand a large share of wisdom, prudence, and spirituality.

“ Perhaps, also, in defining the limits of duty on this subject, it may not be improper further to state, that, under the old synagogue system, it was considered as orderly for the ruler of the synagogue to call out whomsoever he thought proper, to instruct and exhort the people; and that it was by no means uncommon for that officer when he saw any person in the assembly, whether minister or layman, whom he considered as capable of addressing the congregation to advantage, to request him to do so; he himself, however, sitting by all the time, ready to correct any thing that might be said or done amiss. Facts which wear this aspect may be found in *Luke* iv. 16, and *Acts* xiii. 15. I am also inclined to think that this practice

was sometimes adopted in the Christian church, in the first two or three centuries : that is, that when the bishop or pastor of a church was either fatigued, or indisposed, or had any valid reason for keeping silence himself, he felt at perfect liberty to call upon a *ruling elder* or *deacon* to address the people in his stead, and in his presence : and if any thing were uttered which he did not approve, he had an opportunity of stopping or correcting the speaker, and of forbidding him again to officiate in the same manner.—And if, at the present day, a pastor were sick ; or if, in a season of revival, the meetings for social worship within the bounds of his congregation were so numerous that he could not possibly attend them all, he should request an elder or a deacon, of known piety and prudence, to go and speak to the little assemblies convened in his neighbourhood ; the pastor being careful to keep every thing of this kind under his own inspection and management ; I know not that he would be to blame for so doing. But, in such case, the individual so employed, ought to go forth from time to time, as one under the direction of a superior, and not take a single step without the direction, or contrary to the wishes of his pastor.

“ But when, disregarding all these limits, persons who have no claim whatever to the character of authorized teachers, either in possession or expectancy, undertake to usurp the office of those who are thus authorized, and to go forth, in effect preaching the gospel, without license ;—when they appoint meetings, and collect the people together for the purpose of hearing *them* ;—and when they rise and speak to them in the way of instruction and exhortation :—whether they speak from particular texts or not ;—whether they express themselves in the usual ministerial style or not ;—they are chargeable with the sin, and expose themselves to the censure of *lay-preaching*.—Let us now

“ II. Attend to the *evil* of this irregularity. It is probable that many serious persons, who have not attended to the subject, imagine there can be very little evil in the irregularity in question. When their hearts are warmed, and their affections excited ;—when they see people willing to convene for social worship, and at a loss for some one to address them :—it is probable, I say, that many serious persons, placed in these circumstances, hastily

conclude, in the ardour of their feelings, that it is clearly their *duty* to step forward, and become public speakers. But the evils of the practice are very many, and very great; and will undoubtedly appear so when brought to the test either of Scripture or of sober experience.

" 1. It is plainly CONTRARY TO THE WILL OF GOD. If the Christian ministry be a divine ordinance; if we find in scripture an express warrant for the setting apart of a particular set of men for the work of the sanctuary; if preaching the gospel be one of the appropriate, and also one of the most delicate, difficult, and important parts of a minister's work; if no man may take the functions of this office to himself, except he that is called to it of God; if every one who does thus take to himself these functions without authority, invades a divine ordinance, and incurs the divine displeasure; (and all these positions may be established from scripture with the utmost clearness;) then surely there is no difficulty in making out the sinfulness of lay-preaching. Some may doubt what it is that deserves to be so called; but when the character of the act is completely ascertained and admitted, methinks there can be no room for hesitation in pronouncing it a *sinful* act. It was the divine direction that none but the *Levites* should bear or touch the *ark of God*: and we know the fearful consequence which followed the act of one well-meaning man, who merely ventured to touch it once with his hand, and as he thought to prevent it from falling!

" 2. The practice of lay-preaching tends to DEGRADE THE MINISTRY OF THE GOSPEL, which we all grant to be a divine ordinance. When persons who are not clothed with the ministerial character, are enabled to express themselves, in the warmth of their feelings, in a fluent, bold, and impressive manner; when they are observed to speak for a number of times, and perhaps for three or six months together, in a manner pertinent, and highly acceptable to a large class of hearers,—the inference is apt to be, and is often, in fact, found to be,—that there is no need of taking so much pains—incurred so much expense—and engaging in such long-continued and laborious study, in order to become qualified for the work of the ministry. 'Here,' say the rash, the ignorant, and the superficial—'Here are men who never went to col-

lege—never learned Latin or Greek—never went through a regular course of Theological study in their lives ; and yet we do not see but that they preach quite as well, *to say the least*, as those who have enjoyed all these advantages.' It is true, indeed, all enlightened and judicious hearers, perceive with pain, all along, the want of suitable qualifications in these self-made preachers ; they perceive their want of digested knowledge, and lament the crude, uninteresting, and sometimes erroneous matter which they throw out ; and even their greatest admirers, after a few months, begin to see that their stock is exhausted, and that they are not the great preachers which they once imagined them to be. But the discovery is made, in some respects, too late. Unspeakable mischief has been done. Impressions unfavourable to the ministry, and of course to religion, impressions perhaps of the most indelible kind, have been made on the minds of many.

"Nor is it any objection to this reasoning, that we may, in some cases, find individuals, in every community, who are quite as well qualified to instruct their fellow-men in divine things, and perhaps, even better qualified, in many respects, than most ministers. What then ? Suppose we were to apply the same reasoning to civil officers ? Suppose we were to say, 'Many of the legislators of our state are by no means so well qualified to make laws, as many of their fellow-citizens who have not been chosen to that office. Therefore some of the most wise and capable of those who have not been elected ought to intrude into their seats, and perform their duties in their stead, or in company with them.' What would be thought of such reasoning ; or what would be the consequence of undertaking to decide and act accordingly ?* Every one sees,

* *Note by the Editors.*—This is the same kind of reasoning their old mother, the Church of Rome, makes use of to keep up the credit of her priests. A person with whom the writer of this note is well acquainted, who had been formerly a Catholic, being taken sick, was surrounded by a number of Catholics, urging him to send for a priest in order to have matters settled between God and his soul. On his assigning as a reason for not doing this, that he was acquainted with many of their Priests, and knew them to be corrupt and wicked, and therefore were not fit persons to administer to him any spiritual benefit; they told him in reply, *that was nothing to the purpose*—that their Priests were regularly ordained, and rightly authorized ; and therefore, what they did was as valid, and would be

at a glance, how absurd and monstrous it would be. But it is not at all more absurd or more monstrous than the principle and practice which it is intended to expose.

"3. The practice of *lay-preaching* tends to INTRODUCE INCALCULABLE DISORDER AND CONFUSION INTO THE CHURCH.—Often, very often, have the ultimate effects of the disorder of which I am speaking been more mischievous in those neighbourhoods in which they have been exhibited, than their authors could afterwards repair by long lives of sorrow and shame, and of active endeavours to remedy the evil. And as revivals of religion are becoming, blessed be God! more common in our country; perhaps the inhabitants of no neighbourhood can be certain that, in process of time, the foregoing observations may not be found applicable to themselves. In the mean while, if Presbyteries be vigilant and faithful in regard to this subject; and if those who conduct our Theological Seminary, and other similar institutions, be careful to inculcate correct sentiments, and to countenance a proper practice, with respect to this important concern, we may hope that mischief will be averted, and that revivals, if graciously vouch-safed, will not be, as they have sometimes apparently been, blasted by the unhallowed tempers, and irregular conduct of those who professed to be their ardent friends."

[The reader is left to make his own comments on the foregoing, and to judge of the motives which have prompted the writer to bestow so much labour to establish the principle, that none but regularly constituted priests ought to give public instruction to the people. For our own part, we cannot divest ourselves of a belief, that if no emoluments were derived from the priestly office, they would manifest very little concern about who taught the people.]

attended with as much benefit, as if done by the most holy of men—that their being wicked did not destroy their ability to exercise the duties of their office, or lessen the efficacy of their services. Such a sort of logic may serve very well to secure the emoluments and keep up the reputation of corrupt ministers; but who that has any true regard to the honour of the Gospel, would not blush to employ it!

ON A HIRED MINISTRY.

Extracted from a Discourse delivered by an Independent Methodist Minister in England, entitled, "A hired Ministry proved unscriptural :" published by Request of the Quarterly Meeting.

" For the first three centuries no such thing as a regular hired ministry was known. In looking into the Acts of the Apostles, which is the most ancient church history, we do not discover any traces of a regular hired ministry ; collections, it is true, were frequently made, but they were made for poor Christians in general, and not for ministers in particular : they might participate of them, if their necessities demanded, but they neither did nor could claim any right to them in an exclusive way. Their commission to preach the gospel being received from God alone, they were under an imperious necessity to discharge it faithfully, without any reference to a remuneration from the people. Indeed, the circumstances of the times were such, that there would have been no gospel ministry, if the preachers had to have been moved to their duty by mercenary motives. Persecution was then the order of the day ; and the saints of God, particularly the ministers, were literally sent to heaven through streams of kindred blood. The Roman Emperors were bitter enemies of Christianity and of Christians ; and endeavoured, by every possible means, means as cruel as diabolical, to extirpate Christianity from the face of the earth ! Christians were every where treated as the 'filth and offscouring of all things,' and considered as unworthy of holding any public office, or exercising any public profession.— Sometimes, indeed, the tempest seemed for a short interval to be hushed, and the sun broke through the clouds which had obscured its rays. But these seasons of calmness were only temporary, the storm had only ceased to break out with greater violence ; and small indeed were the portions of rest which the Church had for the first three hundred years after its establishment. But during those times of persecution, and when ministers were *un-hired*, there was no lack of genuine Christians ; on the contrary, Christianity never flourished more, never was more pure, never was so like what the Scriptures declare it *ought to be*.

" In those times, we cannot find any thing like a chartered company existing among Christian ministers ; every

man of superior knowledge considered it to be his duty to instruct his more ignorant neighbours ; by this means a large number of pious, upright, disinterested ministers were raised up, who went ‘every where preaching the word.’ The prediction of the Psalmist was fully and literally accomplished, ‘The Lord gave the word, and great were the numbers that published it.’ So rapidly and mightily did Christianity spread, by means of an *unhired ministry*, that in less than fifty years it was known and professed over the whole of Asia and Europe, and even the land of Ham had its Christian churches ! Indeed, when we look at the circumstances in which Christianity was placed at this time, we will find that it could not have had such an extensive promulgation by means of an *hired ministry*. If a regular salary had been paid to all who officiated in the ministry, where would the immense levies have been raised to effect that payment ? And if none but such as were paid had liberty to preach, according to the fashion of modern establishments, (and as some argue) how could Christianity have been so generally known in so short a period after its first promulgation ? The facts of the case are obvious ; every Christian was a minister, an *unhired minister*: and in proportion to his knowledge, faithfulness, and zeal, God blessed his labours, and made him instrumental in the conversion of souls. This view of the subject agrees with both Scripture and Ecclesiastical History ; and upon no other plan could Christianity have been so rapidly and effectually promulgated.

“ *Let us next inquire what was the fate of Christianity after an hired ministry commenced.*

“ We have already observed that three centuries elapsed before Christians were permitted to worship God without molestation ; at the end of this period, persecution ceased ; for Constantine, who professed himself a Christian, became possessed of the imperial power. And a great change then took place with respect to religion ; it was now embraced by the emperor, and also, as a matter of course, by all the sycophants of the court, who are always ready to change to that side where the ‘*loaves and fishes*’ are most abundant. These were *glorious days* for the *selfish priests*. Titles, honours, and riches, were distributed abroad with a liberal hand among the Chris-

tians, and particularly among the preachers ; indeed, the emperor seemed intent upon enriching the church,* and gaining to himself all the friends that he possibly could. His conduct, in this respect, argues very little knowledge of Christianity—It was the death-blow of piety and vital godliness in that day. Preaching now became a *trade*, and the Gospel an article to be *purchased*. And in proportion as riches and luxury increased, so in proportion did religion decrease, till, in the short space of seventy years, the corruptions of the church were pointed out by the truly faithful, as being quite *notorious*.—Vice entered the sanctuary with the approbation of legal authority, and laid her polluted hands on the sacred altar of the Lord—the truth of God was turned into a lie—the ostentatious form of religion was substituted, with much parade, for the power of godliness—the priests considered themselves as a privileged and superior order of men to the laity—their large *salaries* made them proud and haughty ; and as their emoluments were secured to them by ‘ law and statute,’ they cared not for the people.

“ We have already seen, in the progress of this discourse, how Christianity, or the religion of the Gospel, flourished before it was encumbered with an *hired ministry*, and how rapidly it degenerated after the era of *Hirelingism* commenced ; hence the remedy exhibits itself—*A return to primitive Christianity*. This, and nothing short of this, will purge the church, and ensure the progress of genuine Christianity ; for, till ministers of religion become disinterested, and labour for the good of souls, instead of money, we can never expect to see religion prosper and increase. They may preach with the greatest eloquence, and plead for bible and missionary societies with the greatest zeal, but let them give us practical proofs of their Christian philanthropy and love of

“ * The author of this discourse has often thought that the miraculous and famous conversion of Constantine to the Christian faith, was more *nominal* than *real*. He was a cunning and politic man, and saw that he could not consolidate his power, and remain firmly seated on the throne, without some alliance with the Christians, who were now become a powerful body in the empire ; he therefore, probably from political and state motives, determined to secure to himself the aid of the Christians ; and, as a preliminary to this, he renounced Heathenism, and embraced Christianity. Alas ! how many such Christians are there in the present day.”

the Gospel, by giving up their emoluments entirely to the cause of religion, and labouring with their own hands, like the great Apostle Paul, and for his reason, ‘that the Gospel may not be hindered.’ If this were to take place, it would furnish, at the disposal of the bible society, and foreign mission societies, no less a sum than thirteen millions annually ; [57,777,777 dollars] being the sum received by the hired ministry of England, including all denominations.

“ Christianity, under the present institutions, is quite obscured and rendered defective. As the eagle, with mutilated wings, cannot soar in the air, nor the rays of the sun reach us when intercepted by clouds ; so Christianity, when conveyed to us through the medium of hirelings, loses that sublimity, brilliancy, and disinterestedness, for which it is distinguished ; and seems only to exist for the purpose of propping up corruption, keeping tyranny in countenance, and gaining importance by the accumulation of wealth and worldly grandeur.

“ We are quite sure, my brethren, that the millenium will not be accelerated by the efforts of the political church establishments, and money systems of the present day ; for, they who benefit by these anomalies, *know well* that the general establishment of pure Christianity would operate as a tremendous hurricane, to bring them to the dust, and annihilate their power. Hence, instead of facilitating, they endeavour to prevent, the diffusion of genuine Christianity, by exercising their zeal in propagating *formularies, creeds, and systems*, as distinct from Christianity as light is from darkness. And, when the force of truth presses hard upon them, and they feel the difficulty of maintaining their positions, they assume a defensive attitude, and endeavour to raise objections against the doctrine of an unhired ministry, in order to harrass and perplex its advocates.

“ An objection commonly made against an unhired and in favour of a hired ministry is, that without the latter we should have no *learned ministers*. This is easily answered, as it shews at once the spirit by which these objectors are animated : they want a learned ministry—men well skilled in the languages, (rightly named dead) metaphysicians, logicians, and orators—Well, this is all very good ; but what becomes of the *simplicity of the Gospel* ?

‘The world by wisdom,’ says the Apostle, ‘knew not God.’ All the knowledge in the world cannot *convert souls*. It is the simple truth of Jesus Christ that is rendered effectual to the accomplishment of this great work, not learned criticisms, metaphysical reasonings, and logical conclusions, as some falsely imagine. The primitive church did not look at these things, neither did the primitive preachers of the gospel use any of these modes in dispensing the word of life, except the apostle Paul, in one or two instances, and then the occasions were extraordinary. And yet we find the preaching of the apostles was more successful than it has ever been since in the hands of a *learned ministry*. It was the simple mode in which the gospel was originally preached, that first gave rise to this objection, and made it to ‘the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness ;’ and no sooner was the objection made than it was answered by the apostle Paul, in the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans ; to which, my brethren, I wish you to refer.

“From what has been said, it is very plain, that this objection springs not from good and correct reasoning, or a love of truth, but from the *pride* of human nature, and that love of gaudy and ostentatious show which has been and is so prevalent in the world. No true Christian will be anxious for a learned ministry ; because he will be well convinced, that no good end can be answered by it, nor any great good result from it ; inasmuch as the majority of mankind, even in this enlightened age, do not understand or profit by a learned ministry, and that the spirit of God alone can make even the plainest ministry successful. They, then, who argue for a learned ministry, may justly be suspected of having no real religion themselves, and little desire that others should ; and, without any uncharitableness, may be ranked among those in the apostle’s day who had ‘itching ears, heaping to themselves teachers, and loving newfangled doctrines.’ But to bring the matter home, we have in this country a learned ministry : and our universities, colleges, and academies have sent out a number of learned sprigs ; but what have they done ? Have they arrested the progress of infidelity ? Have they stopped the torrent of immorality ? Have they banished profane cursing and swearing out of the land ? Alas ! no. With all their learned sermons, the devil’s

kingdom increases and wickedness abounds ; it has been the poor *unlearned mechanics* that have done the little good that we see is done ; the few truly pious in the land have, in general, been converted by the labours of un-hired ministers. Hear this, ye mighty sticklers for a learned and hired ministry, and tremble at your folly."

PREJUDICE AGAINST THE SCRIPTURES.

Extract from the Report of the Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society in England, respecting the Mission to India, for 1822.

"Mr. Thompson [one of the Missionaries] whose most usual residence is in the imperial city of *Delhi*, has been engaged, as in former years, in extensive journeys to the north and north-east of that place. A fact, noted in one of his latest communications, deserves attention. 'I found,' he remarks, 'that of all who came to hear me, such as were most remote from the British provinces, were the readiest and most unreserved in receiving our scriptures.'"

There can be no great difficulty in accounting for this. Men who profess to receive and venerate the Scriptures, have carried slaughter and devastation throughout all the provinces of Hindostan, now under the dominion of the British, and it is not to be wondered at, that the natives should feel a strong prejudice against a book which such men hold to be their only rule of faith and practice. It is to be observed too, that most of his Majesty's regiments in the east, have become quite engaged in religion, since the Missionaries have gone to those parts, and have formed themselves into Missionary societies ; and also the congregations or churches in India, are mostly composed of soldiers ; many of whom oftentimes are in active service, killing the natives by wholesale. The celebrated orator Phillips, in one of his speeches before a Bible Society in England, when speaking of the progress of the Bible cause, and the increase of religion among the soldiary, observes : "Even the soldier, amid the din of arms and the licentiousness of the camp, makes the Bible his pillow and the companion of his knapsack." Until professors of christianity cease holding a sword in one hand and the Bible in the other, and see the inconsistency of pretending love to the souls of men, while they are employed in killing their bodies, it cannot be expected the Hindoos, or any other people, will entertain a very favorable opinion of their religion. Being unacquainted with

the requirements of christianity, they will judge of its merits and tendency, by the practice and conduct of those who profess it.

CLERICAL DESIGNS :

Extracted from the Anniversary Election Sermon, delivered by D. Huntington, before the Governor, Lieutenant-Governor, Council and Legislature of Massachusetts, May 29th, 1822.

" Let the intelligent look at what is passing in many of our congregations and churches. Let them notice the projects that are put in operation for enlisting partizans, and for augmenting their resources. To gain the control of funds, see them, not only fawning upon the widow, and those who are so unhappy as to be destitute of near relatives, but watching around the dying pillow of the opulent, crying like the horse-leach, 'give, give ;' encouraging the belief, that every cent committed to their disposal, shall be a gem in that crown of glory finally to be bestowed as a reward to the fidelity of their votaries.

" It is not to be disguised, that in some sections of this enlightened Christian community, there is too much evidence of a disposition for spiritual domination. There are bodies of men, still claiming a jurisdiction as absolute, if not as extensive, as was ever claimed by the most imposing Pontiffs of the dark ages. We are daily conversant with those, who with no superior claims to the necessary means of enlightening their fellow men, and having no credentials of any special illumination, seem to be constantly saying to those around them, ' The secret of the Lord is with us,' ' hear his word at our mouths.'

" In all these means, which are used for controlling the right of private judgment, do we not perceive the shattered remnants of the machinery of a once formidable and most mischievous hierarchy? And shall we see our fellow men collecting and arranging these remnants; and endeavouring again to bring them into action, without letting them know, that we are not insensible to their operations, and the evils of them."

CHURCH ESTABLISHMENT.

It appears from a late paper, that a motion was brought forward in the British Parliament, in June last, to have

an inquiry made early in the next session, into the state of the church establishment, and the mode of collecting tithes in Ireland, with a view to make such alterations as might be found necessary. It was stated that "so great were the abuses which prevailed in the church of Ireland, that bishops receiving 10,000 and 20,000 pounds a year for their spiritual labours and holy zeal, remained absent from the country for *twenty years together*. The late bishop of Derry remained for 15 or 20 years with his family in Italy—for that time he never set his foot on the ground which contributed so largely to his revenue.

By the statement of Mr. Wakefield, it appeared that "the rates and rents of the Archbishoprick of Armagh, might be made to amount to 140, or 150,000*l.* a year; that an immense revenue was in the hands of the bishop, and would descend to his successors, the junior branches of the leading families." For the motion 66; against it 72, among whom no doubt were all the *Lord's spiritual* or archbishops and bishops, who have a seat in Parliament by right of their office.

How little do such men heed the principles of justice, or regard the voice of distress, where their own privileges and interest are concerned.

THE REVOLUTION IN MEXICO.

An officer attached to the United States ship John Adams, in giving a view of Mexico, observes:

"The revolution has been achieved through the instrumentality of the clergy, a powerful and comparatively enlightened body of men, who wisely stipulated with the reigning chief [Iturbide] for the preservation of church supremacy and influence. They evinced great policy in their adherence to this creature of their own creation, being well aware that should the contemplated change produce a just manifestation of the wishes of the people, the reaction would have wrung from their possession the immense treasures which their unprincipled avarice had accumulated. With the aid and countenance of the priesthood the revolution was affected, and the throne of Iturbide was triumphantly erected upon the ruin of public and private right, and the scaffolding secured by the horrid machinery of the Inquisition. The deluded and

miserable Catholics repose unlimited faith in the spiritual power of their priests, and while they craftily keep their consciences in subjection, the emperor is grinding them with every temporal engine of despotism."

It is said that one half of the lands in Spain are for sale. These lands recently belonged to the Inquisition, monks, clergy, privileged orders, &c. This mass of property amounts to a prodigious sum. The number of ecclesiastical proprietors amounted to 82,279, and the property which they lately had in possession, is valued at 200,000,000 dollars. [Columbian Star.]

[By a late decree of the Cortes, all the Convents situated in the country, are to be immediately suppressed, and their property applied to the national treasury.]

For the Reformer.

The time seems near at hand, of which it was queried : " When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth ?" True faith and love to God appear to be almost banished from the earth, and the forms and ceremonies of religion substituted in their stead. And although religion is represented by blind guides to be fast increasing, and the number of Christians as very great—and many are induced to believe in consequence of the much preaching and praying throughout christendom, that the reign of righteousness is hastening, and that the knowledge of the Lord will soon cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea ; yet it is too evident to those who are not blinded by a sectarian spirit, that darkness is covering the earth, and gross darkness the people—nearly all who make a profession of religion, as well as others, having lost sight of the injunction : "love not the world, neither the things of the world," or forgotten the declaration, that such as *love the world* have not the *love of the Father in them*.

The number of those who are not seeking their own, but the things of Jesus Christ, appears (if we are to judge the tree by its fruit or Christians by their conduct) to be very small. Self-interest is too much the spring of our actions, and there are too few amongst us who love our neighbour as ourselves, by doing in all things unto others as we would they should do unto us.

True religion is calculated to wean our affections from the world, with its vanities and pleasures ; but in how few things do we, who profess to be Christians, differ from others. How few of us have forsaken all (that is sinful) for *Christ's sake*—in a word, how few walk according to the rule laid down in the Gospel, and deny themselves and take up their cross daily.

A reformation at this time is greatly needed, since the generality of mankind, both priests and people, are so engaged in seeking

their gain from their quarter, that they have but little time to seek after the one thing needful ; and they are so bewildered and blinded by the doctrines and commandments of men, that they appear unable to see the necessity of learning of Him who was *meek and lowly*, in order to find *rest to their souls*. M.

STATE OF GERMANY.

[Extracted from a late paper.]

"There have long been indications of a revolutionary spirit in Germany ; and it is an alarming circumstance that it prevails to a high pitch in the Universities. The students in several of those great seminaries have divided themselves into two parties, one of which are for the continuance of the present state of things, and the restoration of all the original privileges of the ancient families ; and the other for an overthrow of the whole, and the establishment of a democratic form of government. These points are acrimoniously, and no doubt learnedly, discussed by the students ; but this is not all—duelling has become extremely fashionable among them, and the comparative excellences of aristocracies and republics are frequently decided by dint of cutlass and small sword. It was reported, that the state of things in Germany was to be brought before the Congress of Verona, and that a scheme was to be formed by the sovereigns to check the progress of opinions so adverse to their interest."

"Our pamphlets and journals," says a letter from Frankfort, "are not wanting either in revolutionary expressions, or in insults aimed at true royalists, or in calumnies against legitimate governments. Will the government permit a certain German *Observer*, and the *Gazette of Necker* to insult whole administrations, which on account of their dignity and their antiquity, ought to receive the respect of every well organized political society ? Will they suffer a scribbler, like the editor of the *Political Annals*, to direct his envenomed darts, and his false charges against the Holy Alliance, the most solemn act ever signed by men ?

"The revolutionary spirit, (continues the same letter) is far from being extinct in our Universities. It forms part of the plan of the Jacobins to educate the rising generation for revolutions ; and by these means to effect their grand object—the conversion of all Germany into a vast republic. With this view they inculcate the most pernicious maxims into the minds of young men. Such students as do not subscribe to their opinions, soon find themselves fettered with obstacles, and finally stopped in their career. For this reason none are brought to the professors' chairs but men of the liberal party, as they are usually called. Indeed the zeal, activity and perseverance of this party in pursuing their object, are truly astonishing.—For our own part we believe in a real conspiracy, because we see its effects. We see factious preachers, and professors, Bonapartists, ancient members of the association *de la vertu*, German societies, German jacobins, &c. &c. organized in

one phalanx, and attacking with all sorts of arms the basis of legitimacy, the rights of the nobility, and the holiness of religion. We see them persecuting true royalists, misleading youth, and acquiring day after day more influence, direct or indirect, over the government itself. In all this we see an immense secret conspiracy : yet at the same time we fear it will not be generally perceived until the conspirators shall begin to realize their plans.—We therefore regard as well founded the report so widely spread, that the German governments have applied to the Holy Alliance for efficient aid against the revolutionary party ; [one mean to be employed, it appears, is to establish repressive and general measures with respect to the Press] and we hope that those august sovereigns will take measures to secure the repose of our states, to crush our jacobins, demagogues and Bonapartists, and to allow royalists to avow their own sentiments without exposure to the fury of a misguided populace."

From a variety of accounts, it is but too evident that the whole of Europe is in a very unsettled state ; and we have no idea that al the preaching of Missionaries, and the circulation of the Bible going on in that division of the world, will be productive of much benefit, or effect such a change in the morals of the people, as to prevent those countries, at no very distant period, from being deluged with blood and slaughter, in a far greater degree than has been ever yet witnessed. The clergy and chief actors professedly engaged in upholding Christianity throughout Europe, are so degenerate and corrupt, and are such advocates for tyranny and for enslaving the minds and consciences of the population, that they will be more likely to augment the number of deists and atheists, than promote the true interests of Christ's kingdom. The *Holy Alliance*, as it is denominated, has much less of holiness than any thing else belonging to it, being principally designed to prevent free inquiry, and to chain down the people both in mind and body ; thereby rendering them still more wicked and desperate, till at length bursting the bands by which for a time they may be held, they will spread death and desolation far and near, accomplishing the prophecy yet unfulfilled, of the *treading of the wine-press of the wrath of God*, when blood comes out of the wine-press, unto the horse-bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs—a figurative expression, evidently denoting a greater slaughter by the sword, than ever has been recorded in the annals of history. This one prophecy, which no one who is possessed of any correct information can suppose has been yet accomplished, proves to a demonstration, that no real advantage to the morals and righteousness of the people, will be brought about by all the great associations and proceedings of the present day. For judgments so awful and so extensive would not be experienced, except mankind were fully ripe in depravity and wickedness. The extensiveness of the judgments, may be inferred, from events which precede and are preparatory to their accomplishment. Three unclean spirits come out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and false prophet, and go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the bat-

tle of that great day of God Almighty. It is allowed by all, that this great battle takes place under the seventh vial, which it is expressly declared, *fills up the wrath of God*, or is his last judgment before the reign of righteousness commences on the earth.

MISSIONS.

A late writer, in giving a history of Missions, remarks as follows :

"It must be granted that the Jesuits, and others of that communion, have reproached the Christian world by their superior ardor and perseverance, amidst difficulties and sufferings, while they carried their religion into many foreign countries. But it is lamented that they used worldly policy ; that they inculcated the gross errors of their system of faith ; that they accepted converts who, from any motive and without change of character, were willing to profess the christian faith ; and that they thus baptized into the name of the Redeemer vast multitudes, who became two-fold more the children of hell than they were before. The consequence is at the present day, that Catholics in Pagan lands are more inaccessible by the real gospel of Christ than their heathen neighbours.

"Some Protestants, as the Dutch in the East Indies, have carried their religion with their conquests and their trade. They have conducted them all much in the same manner. The effect is, that among their numerous converts, little of religion appears, but the name and the external forms."

It would be a matter of consolation, if the Missionaries of the present time, were doing any better than those here so justly described. But we fear this is not the case; and that the result of their undertakings will only be productive of much the same effect as those stated above.

Osage Mission.

An account of the Mission to the Osage Indians, published in the Boston Recorder, states : "The Missionaries continue to urge the object of their Mission ; but hitherto with comparatively small success." Speaking of the *Great Osage Mission*, it is observed : "A Roman Catholic Priest has visited the village, proposing to instruct and baptise the children ; what the result of his interference shall be, remains to be seen."

[It is probable this Catholic Priest is sent out by the Louisiana Missionary Association, to which the Pope, the Emperor of Austria, and the Emperor Alexander, with other distinguished personages in Europe, made such liberal donations. See our August number for 1822, page 191.]

CATHOLIC MISSIONS.

The queen of Thibet, (says the *Diario Romano*,) has requested to have eighty missionaries from the college of the Propaganda Fide [college for the propagation of the Faith] at Rome, for the purpose of converting her subjects ; five Capuchins (Friars) have already departed for Thibet. An Italian from Brescia, whom the queen made her first minister, converted her majesty to Christianity.

[Newspaper.]

MISSIONARY SPIRIT DECLINING.

The *Boston Recorder* of Nov. 30, speaking of the Hampshire Missionary Society, observes : "Twelve Missionaries have been appointed this year, whose term of service exceeds 250 weeks; nearly five years. Hundreds would be thankfully received, and usefully employed, if they could be obtained and supported. But, we are sorry to record the fact, 'for several years past the contributions of the public to this Society have been diminishing, and, of course, a shade is cast over the prospect of its future operations.' 'A considerable proportion of the towns which formerly poured their contributions with liberality into its treasury, now add little or nothing to its fund.' This is deeply to be regretted. It is well known that the county of Hampshire has contributed largely to all benevolent objects; no part of the state has done more, in proportion to its wealth, if so much, for Foreign Missions, Education Societies, Theological Schools, &c.; and it is not so much matter of surprise, as of regret, that the venerable Hampshire Missionary Society, should be in a measure overlooked."

The Editor of the *Boston Recorder*, in his notice of the past year, with his accustomed assurance, represents those who are opposed to the Missionary proceedings of the present day, as the enemies of Christ's kingdom. "If Missionary Societies," says he, "were of the world, the world would love its own; but because they are not of the world, therefore the world hateth them." He adds, "there cannot be a single doubt that all those vehicles of slander and falsehood which are put in motion by the daring spirit of infidelity [*daring spirit of infidelity!*] will be made subservient to the extending the knowledge of Christ; for surely the wrath of man shall praise God, and he will restrain the remainder." It would answer a better purpose if the editor of the Recorder and other writers of the same description, would cite some instances of the slander and falsehood which he tells us are put in motion, and prove too, that it is done by the daring spirit of infidelity. He concludes his remarks on this subject by observing :

"The Lord will have in derision, all them that hate him; their councils will be carried headlong; and they themselves will become like the grass upon the house-top, which withereth before it groweth up.—No man who sets himself to oppose the measures which God himself has appointed for the conversion of the world, [the measures they are pursuing, are no doubt meant] can be the friend of God. And when Christians perceive that the enemies of God are collecting their strength, to make the most effectual resistance in their power to the spread of Christianity, will they not pray the more earnestly—unite the more perfectly—and contribute the more freely and abundantly of such things as they have, to carry into effect the great commission of the Saviour, 'preach the Gospel to every creature.'"

If, in attempting to fulfil this commission, the Missionaries followed in the footsteps of Christ and the Apostles, and their labours

were attended with the same effects, it is very certain that none but the "enemies of God" would be opposed to their proceedings ; but when all their undertakings are characterized by pride and pomp, when the whole land is ransacked and the most artful schemes are resorted to, to get money from the people, and no real benefit results from all they do, it becomes the duty of those who are not blinded by the spirit of the times to expose their practices, and to show to deluded millions, that the cause they are engaged in and the cause of Christ are entirely distinct, and have no more affinity to each other, than light with darkness. We can, indeed, view the Missionary undertakings of the present day, only in the same light as the labors and zealous efforts of the proselyting pharisees, and believe they will be productive of as little good to mankind, as the famous *Propaganda* at Rome, which from time to time our Missionaries deem it proper to expose.

CHARACTER OF THE AMERICAN INDIANS,

Extracted from "Dr." Morse's Report on Indian Affairs.

" Indians talk but little ; they have the wisdom not to talk when they have nothing to say—a trait of character worthy the imitation of many, who claim to be wiser than the Indians. In conversation they do not interrupt each other, but wait respectfully till the speaker has finished. Backbiting, whispering, cursing and swearing, to our shame it must be said, are vices, not of *savage*, but of *civilized* men ! The Indians who have been *conversant with white men*, like the ancient Cretans, are liars.—Hospitality is a prominent trait in the Indian character. To the stranger, whether white or red, they are hospitable and generous, furnishing the best food and accommodations their dwellings afford ; often relinquishing their own food and lodging for the refreshment and comfort of the stranger.

" The Indians are shrewd observers, and quick discerners of character. They have a high sense of honour, justice and fair dealing, and great sensibility, when advantage is taken of their weakness and ignorance, to deprive them of their property, and in other ways, to trespass on their rights. When their confidence in this way, is once lost, it is difficult to regain it. Their distrust, too, is not limited to the man who injures them, but is extended to all whom he is supposed to represent. ' This white man would cheat us out of all our property. All white men would do the same. White men are cheats.' This view shews how necessary it is, that the government, in all their transactions with Indians, should be just, faithful to fulfil all their promises to them with paternal kindness. In this way alone can they regain and secure their lost confidence ; and without their confidence and affection, we can do them very little good. This view of the Indian character, also, shows how indispensable it is to the success of any plans for the benefit of the Indians, that none but men of good and exemplary character, should ever be permitted to go among them. The reasons are so obvious, that no observations are necessary to elucidate or enforce them."

Places of Worship in Philadelphia.

It appears from a statement in the *Religious Remembrancer*, that the number of places of worship in the city and suburbs of Philadelphia is 71, besides several others now erecting; which is nearly double the number to those in London, according to the population in 1816. The places of worship in London at that time, in all, were 396, viz. of the established church, 166; English Dissenters, 186; Dutch and German Protestants, 19; Roman Catholics, 13; Quakers, 6; Jews, 6.

In a periodical work printed at Newburgh (N. Y.) the Baptist congregations in the United States are stated at 3,200; settled ministers at 3000; members at 400,000. Methodist congregations, estimated at 1,875; travelling preachers, 977; members 281,146.

RELIGIOUS SUMMARY.

From a late statement made by the Treasurer of the *American Education Society*, it appears that the amount of the permanent Fund of the Society is 21,880 dollars. Two thousand and forty dollars have been paid into the Treasury of this Society by females, during the last year, for constituting persons (mostly ministers) life members of the Society. The whole number of *life members* of the American Education Society, constituted by *females*, is 184, whereby 7,360 dollars have been obtained.

Mrs. Jane Keith, of Charleston, S. C. has gave 2,500 dollars for the endowment of a Scholarship in the Theological Seminary at Princeton.

The subscriptions to the Theological School in the Diocese of Virginia, have amounted to more than 10,000 dollars within a few months, through the agency of a single individual, Mr. John Nelson.

The editorial business of the *Presbyterian Magazine*, published in this city, is transferred to *Ashbel Green*, late President of Princeton College. The publication henceforward is to bear the name of *Christian Advocate*.

It is stated that the present Pope is 80 years of age. That the present income of a Cardinal is not more than 400 pounds a year.

A body of Methodists, in Kentucky, have lately separated themselves from the Episcopal Methodists, and instituted a mode of church government, for their own, which nearly resembles that of the Presbyterians.

TO READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

We have occupied so large a portion of our pages with extracts from *Thoughts on Lay-Preaching*, and the *Discourse on a Hired Ministry*, that we have been obliged to omit several pieces intended for this number.

The communication from "Blair," will be either inserted, or our reasons assigned at a future time.

The letter from Portage County, written the forepart of September, has only just come to hand. Our correspondent in Geauga county is a person of responsibility and respectable standing. We shall write to him on the subject which has been mentioned, and if there should be any inaccuracy in the statements, they shall be corrected in a future number.

 Wm. and Joseph Marot, back of 93 Market-street, have accepted the Agency of this work. Any letters or remittances, however, sent to the former Agent and Printer, will be punctually attended to; and when more convenient, subscribers may enter their names there, pay their subscriptions, and receive the numbers. Communications and letters, in order to receive more immediate attention, may be directed to T. R. GATES, Proprietor and principal Editor, No. 299, North Third-street.

[The poetry below was originally written for, and appeared in another publication, but having been copied by the author for the perusal of a friend in this city, he has requested its insertion in the Reformer. We had intended to make considerable extracts from a letter which accompanied it, but must postpone it to a future number for want of room.]

The following lines were suggested by reading some accounts in the Reformer, for May, 1822, exhibiting the daring effrontery of priestly arrogance, in the severe lashings they have given the President and Congress, for holding public worship in the Capitol, and exercising their constitutional right in choosing a chaplain, and also a new plan for raising a Missionary revenue, extracted from the Boston Recorder for April,—together with an extract from a discourse delivered by the Rector of St. Paul's, Boston.

THE DEACON'S CORNFIELD.

| | |
|---|--|
| We Priests have labor'd with incessant toil, | Still not enough, not half enough they cry, |
| Rouse Deacons then, and try your skill awhile; | O give us MORE! or we must work or die. |
| You know the troubles of the Lord's anointed, | Though silly girls have robb'd themselves of gowis |
| And how for years we have been disappointed; | In country places, villages and towns; |
| While that vile barrier in the constitution Remains, we can't effect a revolution, | Tho' loud appeals are to the churches made, |
| Nor get our fingers in the public purse,— In fact, things seem to grow from bad to worse! | And public begging has become a trade— Yet all these plans will not the cause sustain, |
| Our President, so very lax has grown, That lo! He keeps a chapel of his own, | Some new invention must be tried, 'tis plain. |
| 'T hat lo! He keeps a chapel of his own, And opes its doors to all who wish to come, | Go to the Farmers, beg the use of land, |
| Which leaves our pews as empty as a drum: | To others then, who ploughing understand, |
| Congress beside, won't hand us any cash in, Nor even wince at our severest lashing. | No matter who, elect, or reprobate, |
| Their choice of chaplain is a daring sin, | They'll help alike, to save the sinking state. |
| And serves to let licentious doctrines in; | Three thousand Deacons, if they could procure |
| It shows indifference to all wholesome laws | Five acres each, 'twould raise a fund that's sure; |
| And disregard to orthodoxy's cause. | Their skill and prowess would be highly priz'd, |
| We trust, howe'er, they'll feel a just correction, | And the whole number might be canoniz'd. |
| Through our influence at the next election. | But to the cornfield let us turn again, |
| Besides all this, sad is the situation In the new settled district of the nation, | And follow up the begging scheme amain, |
| So many diff'rent and discordant sects Whose vagaries no wholesome law corrects: | Beg good manure, as much as shall be wanted, |
| No avaricious priest can find a place To preach the principles of partial grace, | Beg to the seed, and beg it duly planted, |
| Nor get a salary to his priestly wishes, That suits his appetite for loaves and fishes. | Then beg it hoed, first second, and third time, |
| Come Deacons, then, bestow your whole attention, | And if the season's good, it will be prime! |
| (Necessity's the mother of invention,) Now, tho' the clergy and their satellites | Next beg it gather'd, marketed and sold; |
| Have rais'd vast sums in dollars, shillings, mites, | Then thank the tools, and pocket all the gold: |
| | With this more Missionaries might be made, |
| | At least as good as many of the trade; |
| | And sent abroad twelve thousand miles or more |
| | To try their skill like those at Serampore. |
| | HANNAH. |

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